

Upper Columbia-Salmon Clearwater District
RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES
OCTOBER 16 & 17, 2002

Fritz Rennebaum, UCSC District Manager, introduced himself as the Designated Federal Official for the RAC and welcomed the RAC members: William Madonna, Bruce Brewer, Mark Taylor, Dan Rix, Louise Stark, Kathy Richmond, Hope Benedict, Bryan Rowder, John Barker, Ben O'Neal and David Nelson, who have been appointed by the Secretary of Interior.

Fritz thanked the RAC members for their willingness to serve and for their time. He described the positions of the elected officers for the RAC and that the prior RAC Chair, Larry Drew is no longer on the RAC. Doug Boggan is the Vice-Chair with second Vice-Chair being Kathy Richmond who will help guide this meeting.

Each RAC Member gave a brief introduction and expressed their areas of interest:

*New RAC member or first meeting attended

*John Barker – elected official, a City Councilman from Lewiston; retired after 33 years of teaching at Lewis Clark State College. He loves the outdoors and is interested in air quality issues.

*Louise Stark- represents commercial recreation, resides in Challis, and has owned/operated White Cloud Outfitting for 16 years.

Bryan Rowder – Park Manager for Farragut State Park representing dispersed recreation.

*David Nelson – IDF&G hunter education coordinator for North Idaho. Has a varied background represents Public-At-large on the RAC.

Kathy Richmond – Representing environmental/resource conservation and lives in Clayton. Has been on the RAC for seven years.

*Hope Benedict – Representing historical interests lives in Salmon. She has a PhD in U.S. History.

*Mark Taylor – Has been with IDF&G since 1983 and is the Landowner/Sportsman Coordinator; resides in Coeur d'Alene.

Bruce Brewer – Resource Manager for LP Corp, representing timber industry and loves the outdoors.

Dan Rix – retired from lumber manufacturing, representing dispersed recreation, and on the RAC since it started.

Ben O'Neal – Lifetime rancher from May, Idaho. Represents grazing.

Bill Madonna – software engineer loves exploring by 4-wheel drive, off-highway-vehicle issues.

Stephanie Snook, RAC Coordinator, reviewed and updated the RAC member list with changes.

Fritz pointed out the boundaries of the three BLM Districts in Idaho, including UCSC District, Upper Snake River District and Lower Snake River District, as well as the four Field Offices in UCSC District: Salmon, Challis, Cottonwood and Coeur d'Alene. Fritz went on to describe the District Managers Staff and their responsibilities:

Field Office-includes a staff to complement the resources they manage – such as range, outdoor recreation, cultural resources, geologist, mining, hazardous materials, hydrology, fisheries, realty, forestry, fire and others with some staff being shared between offices. Technicians as well as seasonal employees assist the professionals in each office.

Administration – contracting, purchasing, computer systems, records
Operations – engineers, surveyors, GIS
Fire and Aviation – works closely with Field Offices

District Managers staff – Stephanie Snook (Public Affairs lead for the District as well as Planning and Environmental Coordination for Cottonwood and Coeur d'Alene), Kathe Rhodes (Planning & Environmental lead for the District and Public Affairs for Salmon and Challis), Associate District Manager, Lew Brown, and Law Enforcement.

BLM is managed on State or political boundaries. This State Director provides support to three Districts. There are about 12 million acres of public land in Idaho. One State Director manages Oregon and Washington. New Mexico, North and South Dakota, and Oklahoma also have one State Director. The State Director reports to the National BLM Director, Kathleen Clarke who, in turns reports to the Secretary of the Interior, Gale Norton. Idaho has an Acting State Director, Mike Ferguson, at this time. The State Director is the highest competitive service level employee; not appointed. The BLM Director position is appointed, after being sanctioned by the majority of the Senate, which is unlike the Forest Service Chief who can come from rank and file.

Stephanie:

Presented copies of and reviewed RAC Charter with Council members

Discussed methods of voting in the event a quorum is not reached (email, phone, teleconference) and to share information throughout the year.

Reviewed BLM websites that contain useful information that are continually updated.

Kathy Richmond:

Presented and reviewed minutes of previous meeting and discussed past meetings where field trips have been incorporated (Cottonwood to see weed situation with yellow star thistle, Challis to look at grazing allotments with ranchers and environmental groups to discuss rangeland standards and guidelines). Discussed OHV Recreation subgroup that was formed and how guidelines for various users were brought back to the full RAC for recommendation to BLM. Other subgroups have been formed to work on issues involving weeds, FS Fee Demo, Mackay Reservoir, and recreation standards and guidelines. The Rangeland standards and guidelines involved the original RAC members and was the first issue the then Secretary of Interior had the RACs focus on. These efforts involved various members of the public as well as the BLM staff and managers.

Bill Madonna asked for an update on the OHV issue. Terry Heslin is the new coordinator for this at the Boise office. Efforts are underway by both Salmon and Challis Field Offices to inventory and/or implement some OHV changes due to their new plans. A statewide effort is continuing and the RAC may be asked to help or become involved at this sometime soon.

Reviewed Summary of Accomplishments that Stephanie put together based on records in the office. This gave the new members a chance to see what has already been done and to give them ideas of how involved they will be expected to be.

Stephanie led the group through a brainstorming exercise to identify the issues they, individually, are interested in learning more about or working on:

Fuel reduction/thinning; policy and regulations
Forest Health, prescribed burns
Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)
Cheat grass/fire
Smoke Management
Wildlife
Economic Development
Stewardship Projects
OHV use (wildlife/hunting impacts) and project in Challis for a multi-use trail
BLM Specialists help to educate RAC (Wildland fire, standards & guides, forest health, Lewis and Clark)
Educate the public and protect the land involved with Lewis and Clark Trail/Bicentennial Range Management (windshield range specialists); standards vs a broader look at the health of the land
Land Exchanges/Sales/Acquisitions (private & other agency missions)
Endangered Species Act (special designations and effect on humans-lynx)
Fire Suppression (initial attack)
Anadromous fish recovery
Water Quality

Fritz and Stephanie updated the group on these various issues for a more complete or better understanding of BLM's policy, regulations, National Initiatives, and work that is/has been done.

Fritz told the RAC that they could do the research and make recommendations to change policy.

Fritz described the efforts underway with the Service First Initiative. The previous administration started this to get better management between agencies (BLM and FS); it is endorsed by the current administration. The intent is to increase efficiencies. The BLM office in Salmon is collocated with the Salmon-Challis National Forest; attempts were made to do the same with BLM in Challis but they are ending up with a separate and new facility. The collocation for the Idaho Panhandle National Forest in Coeur d'Alene and BLM has started. In some cases, one manager oversees two agencies in the same building. Also discussed if these efforts could apply to Idaho Departments such as Fish and Game, Parks and Recreation and if there was discussion about joining BLM offices in Washington and Idaho. Right now the efforts are with BLM and FS and options have discussed combining offices within Idaho/Washington.

Office of Species Conservation – Fritz explained that we tried to get someone from this office to come over to the RAC but, because they operate on a State level, they couldn't leave Idaho and meet in Missoula. We will keep them on the agenda and hope to incorporate them into a meeting within Idaho.

John Barker said to keep in mind the use of people from colleges and universities – agreed that there is a need to utilize their resources as well.

Fritz described BLM's role on public land within the Superfund site involving the Environmental Protection Agency. This project has been going on for about 15 years and is expected to continue for another 30 years. The CERCLA regulations apply to private land. The Superfund "box" includes about 21 square miles in the Coeur d'Alene Basin. Approximately 43,000 acres of public land are within the Coeur d'Alene Basin.

Smoke Management - John Barker spoke on the smoke management issues in Lewiston and the barriers between regional boundaries. This is an issue he is particularly interested in and it affects the burning on private land as well as coordination that needs to be done with State, BLM and Forest Service.

The RAC identified the need to learn more about some of these issues and BLM programs. Reading material can and will be provided, along with staff experts. Bryan Rowder also noted that public education needs to be done, including mainstream news items.

10/16/02 Adjourned at 4:43 p.m.

October 17, 2002

8:00 a.m. Meeting Reconvened

Continued discussing the items on the list developed on 10/16.

Fuel reduction/thinning; Forest Health, prescribed burns/Wildland Urban Interface:

Kathy Richmond brought up the idea of a field trip with other industry or non-industry experts who could share information about the latest technology and methods being used. This would give perspectives that would be different from BLM. Fritz supported the idea. Bruce Brewer suggested the RAC hear three different views (Federal, State, and IDF&G) and learn about other agency priorities on this topic. Mark Taylor suggested the Chamber of Commerce. David Nelson pointed out that large fires are a symptom, not a cause, and the real issue is forest health.

Fritz explained that this administration is promoting us to look at biomass and economics. John Barker pointed out that there is a shortage of wood chips into Lewiston at Potlatch. He said there is a need to look at “cottage” industry to get the fuel out of the woods. Fritz has asked the BLM Forester to go to the Idaho Panhandle NF and work with them on these issues.

Wildlife - Bruce Brewer reported that Boundary County had a shortage of winter wildlife habitat outside of the valley bottom. The industry is there and wood is available. The challenge is to make this a priority and palatable to the public.

Fritz reviewed a BLM News Release addressing the priorities:

1. Fuel reduction projects
2. Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)
3. Municipal Watersheds
4. Habitat for Endangered Species
5. Forest or Rangeland Health

The Idaho Parks and Recreation Department at Farragut State Park has been trying to propose some fuel reduction and healthy forest projects but they have been met with mixed public support. There are mixed feelings about these types of projects.

OHV - The Idaho BLM OHV plan will be available for public comment soon. You can comment as individuals or as a RAC.

Exchanges – provide opportunities to consolidate public land, gain access to public land (mountains, lakes, large and small areas). The counties and State of Idaho are concerned about increasing the amount of public land in some counties due to large amount of public land and small amount of private land that can affect PILT payments and county tax base. As a general rule, BLM disposes of three acres for every one-acre that is acquired, due to the higher valued land that is acquired. Land values are based on

appraisals and include some very valuable land around Coeur d'Alene Lake, along the Lower Salmon River, and other public areas.

Acquisitions can also be done by purchase as well as donation. BLM, through Congressional appropriations to the Department of the Interior, has received money through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. For projects along the Lower Salmon River, BLM received \$16 million to purchase land and easements along 153 miles of river; about \$2 million appropriated per year. Other big projects in the state include the South Fork of the Snake River, near Idaho Falls, and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, primarily in the Salmon area.

Sales – very seldom meet the criteria in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. Usually these are small, remote parcels surrounded by private land. BLM would rather include these in a land exchange package and dispose of them to the adjacent landowner via a third-party facilitator, such as the Birch Creek exchange that Stephanie did in Salmon.

State Exchanges – done to reposition lands to make the ownership more efficient. The State is primarily interested in generating revenue for schools so our two missions do not always fit. The State received sections 16 and 36 within each township and there have been additional exchanges to consolidate State and BLM land. The Western Governor's Association promotes these types of exchanges.

Rangeland Standards and Guidelines (S&G)– Western Watershed Project lawsuit has raised the question about who is the governing agency, BLM or Forest Service on the Morgan Creek Allotment where there is jointly managed land.

Kathy discussed the RAC process involved in developing the rangeland standards and guidelines. She said it was not an easy task and there were many different opinions. They worked through those and really listened to each other so they could learn and move forward. They were not able to reach agreement about specifics, such as 4" to 6" stubble height, rather than stating "functioning stream" which would be subject to interpretation in many different ways and by different people.

Fritz told the Council that the Acting State Director wants to take another look at the S&Gs and got the approval of the BLM Director. There will be a proposal for monitoring the S&Gs that will most likely involve the RAC. John Barker would like copies of the S&Gs and a staff specialist to give a presentation.

Educate the public and protect the land involved with Lewis and Clark Trail/Bicentennial
Hope asked how the BLM is addressing the increased visitor use along the trail so that public land is protected. Issues involve access to the trail, protection of the trail, traffic problems, camping, etc. Pete Sozzi is the Idaho BLM Lewis and Clark Trail Coordinator. He is involved with various other groups/efforts such as the Governor's L&C Committee that establishes policy and the Technical Committee that Pete and many others are on. He is on working with people from the National Park Service, Bureau of Reclamation in

Montana, the Bitterroot National Forest, Salmon-Challis National Forest and BLM in Idaho and Montana dealing with issues on the Continental Divide at Lemhi Pass. A new Sacajawea Education, Interpretive and Cultural Center in Salmon is underway, thanks to a \$1million grant from HUD to the city of Salmon. BLM is involved with this facility, as well as development of new recreation sites (Tower Rock, Discovery Hill, First Flag Unfurling Site, Sharkey Hot Springs, Pink House), the OHV plan for Salmon Field Office and other multi-jurisdictional projects. Suggested bringing Pete to the next RAC meeting for an overview of what is being done.

Discussion on future RAC issues to work on:

Developing S&G for forested lands-would like guidance from Secretary of the Interior

Develop Mission Statement for UCSC RAC

BLM should help decide what issues the RAC should work on

Focus on topics that need to be taken forward to the November National RAC meeting in Phoenix

Take the top two topics from the National RAC meeting

Vegetation Treatment EIS includes chemical, mechanical, and biological controls. The weed subgroup could work on this again.

Election of officers was held and the new officers are:

Chair – Kathy Richmond

Vice-Chair – Doug Boggan

Secretary – David Nelson

After reviewing the issues/topics from page three of these minutes, Stephanie facilitated the RAC in a process to combine like issues and to further expand them:

1. The Role of Fire in Watershed Health

- Fuel reduction and thinning policy and regulations as it relates to fire management – not as an excuse to cut more timber
- Role of prescribed fire
- Cheat grass/fire interaction
- Smoke management/air quality
- Need for better inter-agency communications regarding burning in the state and with adjoining states.
- Wildlife habitat improvements
- Economic Development – create jobs; mills now set up to handle smaller diameter trees
- Restore ponderosa pine habitat
- Ecological/Economic Viability/Compatibility – multi-beneficial programs such as the WUI program benefiting big game winter range, jobs, restoration of ecosystem, public safety
- Wildland Urban Interface as it relates to fire safety
- Fire suppression techniques and appropriateness

2. Service First
 - Money from stewardship projects should stay in the local office/state rather than going to the General Treasury (i.e., green tree sales, grazing permit fees, outfitter and guide fees; money left over from paying timber contracts)
 - The Forest Service Fee Demonstration Project is a good example where the money is kept and reinvested in specific projects in the local Ranger District.
3. RAC Member Term Reappointments
 - Streamline reappointments by eliminating letters of reference and Governor's review; leave it up to the District Manager.
 - Eliminate duplication of effort.
 - Notify all people who were nominated/applied, particularly those not chosen, and thank them for their application and interest.
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4. Public Input Process
 - Keep public input process and encourage citizen oversight of U.S. Forest Service and BLM activities (i.e., National Fire Plan, Healthy Forests Initiative, etc.)
 - Find ways to streamline public input but do not eliminate it
5. Endangered Species Act
 - Take proactive steps to prevent species listings (i.e., how to improve fish habitat)
 - Understanding special designations (lynx) and the ripple effect that listing species has on land uses and the economy
 - How to improve fish habitat; recover fish populations and prevent additional listings of species.
6. Have F.S. and BLM RAC's work together
7. Other topics- time permitting
 - Land Use Planning
 - Off-Highway-Vehicle Use
 - Vegetation Treatments
 - Weeds
 - Mine Waste Clean-up/Abandoned Mines
 - Land Exchanges/Sales/Acquisitions
 - Watershed Health, especially water quality (TMDL's, ground water temperatures and minimum flows for fish)

Patty Bates – Ranger on the North Fork and Middle Fork Ranger Districts, Salmon-Challis National Forest

Forest Service Resource Advisory Committee

Salmon-Challis Forest – Fee Demo Project (attached handouts)

20,000 people floated on the Main and Middle Fork Salmon Rivers

UCSC RAC was asked to help the Forest Service and others on the fee demo project prioritization process. Stephanie will prepare a letter for Fritz's signature to George Matejko, Forest Supervisor, with the names of people to serve on the subgroup for recreation fee demo project. The subgroup will be used for information gathering and will report back to the full RAC. The full RAC will review and make recommendations to Fritz who will forward those to the Forest Supervisor. Hope Benedict and Louise Stark volunteered to be on the subgroup and Doug Boggan will be asked to serve on this since he did the last time.

Continue Brainstorming:

Stewardship Projects

Similar to fee demo. The money stays with the agency for that area, money generated by sales of timber and then can be used for goods or services. Idaho Dept. of Lands has stewardship projects on a list; newsletter, training provided, the stewardship area is signed. Money from product sold stays with the District. Revenue from the sale of "green: trees goes to the general Treasury whereas sale of root rot/bug kill trees comes back to office.

BIN Items –

RAC Nomination and Renomination Process – will discuss at next meeting

RAC Meetings - How often, day of week? Agreed to meet on dates BLM published in the Federal Register: March 12 & 13 and June 18-20 with a field trip

Watershed Health, economic development, \$ stay in local area

Timber sale policy regulations - difference between FS and BLM

Items for Next Meeting:

Background on each RAC member

Pete Sozzi

More discussion about June field trip (where and topics)

Timber Sale Process & that of Forest Health Initiative

Rangeland S&G

History, Survey, Possible Field trip

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Bruce Brewer, seconded by David Nelson

Meeting adjourned at 3:21 p.m.

Minutes from this meeting were read and approved on March 13, 2003.